

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-53 were pending in this application. Claims 7, 8, 20, 26, 27, 34, 35, 51 and 52 have been cancelled, and claims 1, 12, 21, 29, 38 and 46 have been amended hereby to more clearly recite features of the present invention. Support for the amendment to the claims can be found in the now-cancelled claims and, for example, page 3, lines 1-5, and Figures 8A-C of the present application. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-6, 9-19, 21-25, 28-33, 36-50 and 53 will be pending herein. For the reasons stated below, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or 35 U.S.C. §103(a) citing Jones et al., U.S. Patent 6,219,648 and Kidder et al., U.S. Patent 6,445,774. To the extent these grounds of rejection might still be applied to claims presently pending in this application, they are respectfully traversed.

Aspects of the present invention are directed to unique and novel features for improving well-known trouble tracking systems. Such well-known trouble tracking systems include a database that stores "tickets" that are generated for purposes of problem resolution. Once a problem is detected, a new ticket is opened and remains open in the database until a satisfactory resolution of the problem is achieved, whereupon the ticket is closed. Jones et al. disclose a classic trouble tracking system that is used in a large telecommunications services environment.

However, Jones et al., as well as Kidder et al., fail to disclose features of the present invention that are now even more clearly recited in each of the independent claims in this application.

Specifically, a significant aspect of the present invention is the association of the owner of the trouble tracking system with an outsourced entity that is responsible for resolving and acting on tickets stored in a trouble ticket database. Page 3, lines 1-5, of the present application describes that conventional issue management systems are designed for use internal to an organization. However, in recent years there has been a trend to “outsource” certain business functions. In response to this emerging trend, the present invention provides a system that enables an organization that is under contract with the owner of a troubled tracking system to be assigned a particular ticket, act on that ticket, and subsequently update the trouble ticket database of the system. In addition, the present invention enables the owner of the system to verify that a ticket has been properly resolved by such an outside entity.

The foregoing aspects of the present invention are now expressly recited in each of the independent claims. For example, amended claim 1 recites a means for communicating with and sharing trouble ticket data with an organization that operates under outside contract. The organization assigns its own tracking number to a given trouble ticket, and the tracking number is stored in the database of the trouble tracking system. Furthermore, the database stores information relating to whether a resolution of a trouble ticket, proposed by outsourced personnel who work for the organization, has been verified. In other words, the claims of the present application now more clearly recite that the “organization,” originally recited, for example, in claim 7, is an organization that performs contracted outsourced functions. In addition, the claims

now recite that a resolution of a particular trouble ticket is verified by the operator of the trouble tracking system thereby assuring that problems are properly resolved.

While Jones et al., describe a trouble ticket system that achieves some of the same goals and performs some of the same functions of aspects of the present invention described in the instant application, Jones et al., even in combination with any of the other prior art of record, fail to disclose or to suggest a trouble tracking system or method that enables an outsourced organization under outside contract to access and update a trouble tracking system, let alone functionality that permits the operator of the trouble tracking system to verify a resolution of a particular ticket that is proposed by outsourced personnel who work for the organization, as is now clearly recited in the independent claims of this application.

Since the prior art of record fails to disclose or to suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully request that the §102(e) and §103(a) rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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Attachments: /

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